



*Robert Anderson.*

PAINTINGS & DRAWINGS



Catalogue no. 344.

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I think of myself as a painterly realist; an object painter. That means I select things from my environment, set them up in front of me or set up in front of them, and take the information for the paintings from these objects.

That has not always been the case. Paintings up until 1977 were large abstract expressionist works based on the various colours, rhythms, and textures found in the fencing combinations used to isolate one part of suburbia from another, i.e. wooden palings, brick and corrugated iron. Sketches formed the foundation for the colour and then the forms were pushed around to let the colours and shapes create their own boundaries. It meant destroying some forms or amplifying others to come up with the end result - an arrangement which was unified. Each part of the surface was meant to enhance the other parts.

Toward March 1977, the work seemed to be up against a brick wall literally and was not evolving. There seemed to be two choices, quit painting or start all over again. I decided to start again and used some simple still life objects as a device to learn more about handling paint and as a tool to come to terms with the formal elements. Painterliness, for me, is some evidence of the personality of the artist, a signature, a way of making marks that is inherent in the make-up of the artist. It is a way of describing a form that lets the viewer know that paint is the vehicle for the representation. The objects are there to carry the

paint and to act as a vehicle for gaining some understanding of my environment.

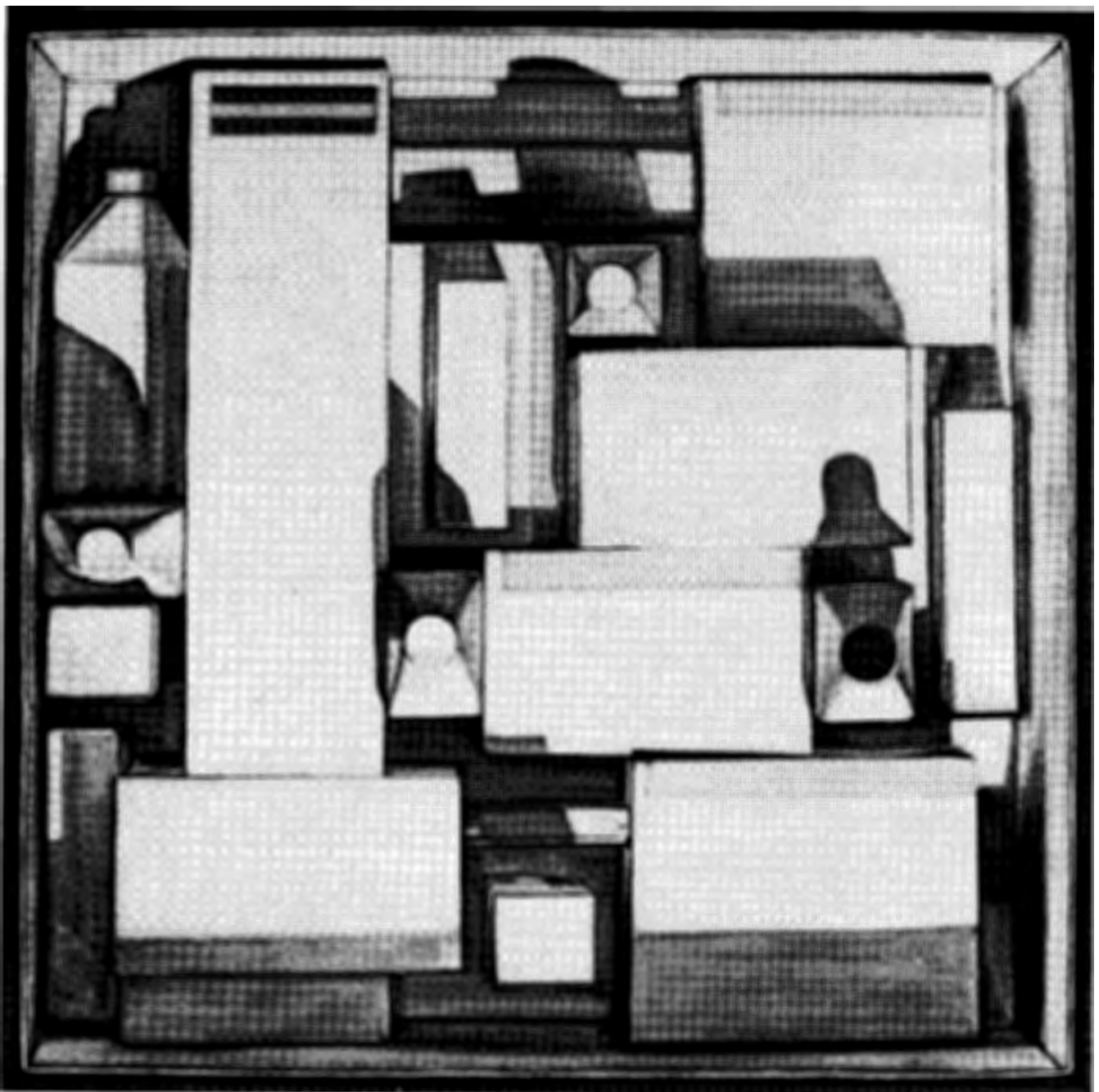
Paintings must work formally to be successful aesthetically. The formal elements - drawing, composition, value, colour and texture - should come together to create work that is complete, ordered and harmonious. The objects were useful in setting particular problems, how to make a warm colour sit back, how to make a cool colour come forward, how to get an object to sit on a surface and yet separate from its surrounds, etc. What began as an exercise became a long term pre-occupation. Suddenly, a two dimensional painter discovered the joy of working with the illusion of the third dimension.

Some time later, the still life included a honey tin that had not been sealed up the side and had no top or bottom. It was interesting for the obvious element of reflection but also because light could get inside more easily and the inside of the can, reflecting on itself, presented a whole range of abstract images. These paintings were considered as interior landscapes with a consistent image that, because of its reflective quality, took on the character of the objects and colours placed in and around it.

There were three levels of seeing in these paintings - the objects around the cans, their distorted image reflected in the outside surface of the cans, and the abstract images within the cans where the inside of the can reflected on itself.

The subject matter over the past few years has shifted from objects to posters to landscape and back again. The work has been about acquiring knowledge of the environment through refining perception. "The closer you look, the more you see. You see a world within a world." (Peter Dombrovskis on the S.W. Tasmanian wilderness). I considered that a penetrating look at finer and finer levels of the surface value of objects might expose something of their inner quality and thus allow appreciation of the full value of the objects. Fromm says that there is a difference in seeing and seeing, that few are able to see the full value of an object because they project their hang-ups onto it, and that to respond fully and completely to an object is to become one with it. Exhibiting the work allows others to see how much insight has been gained through this study. It is an ongoing project requiring the development of both painter and paintings.

The paintings have been done with a limited palette of oil colours made up of the three primaries, including a warm and cool of each, and white. Black oil was used as a medium which consists of one part litharge, one part bees wax, and ten parts linseed oil.



Catalogue no. 342.

## BACKGROUND

### Born

1935, Chicago, Illinois

### Education

- 1973 Diploma of Fine Art Painting, S.A. School of Art  
1974 Diploma of Education, State College of Victoria at Hawthorn  
1981,82 Candidate for Master of Fine Art degree, University of Tasmania

### One Person Exhibitions

- 1973 Llewellyn's Gallery, Adelaide  
1975 C.A.S. Gallery, Adelaide  
1975 Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne  
1978 Ararat Regional Gallery  
1979 Stuart Gerstman Gallery, Melbourne  
1980 Stuart Gerstman Gallery, Melbourne

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 1972 Flinders University Art Exhibition, Adelaide  
1972 Adelaide University Art Exhibition. Awarded best overall cash prize  
1973 Llewellyn's North Adelaide Gallery  
1973 Toorak Gallery, Melbourne  
1973 Trustees Prize Exhibition, Brisbane  
1974 South Yarra Gallery, Melbourne  
1975 Alice Springs Art Foundation Exhibition  
1977 Bendigo College of Advanced Education  
1978 Realities Gallery, Melbourne  
1979 Glenfiddich Travelling Exhibition, *Still Life Still Lives*  
1979 Alice Springs Art Foundation Exhibition  
1979 Latrobe Valley School Art Foundation, Melbourne  
1979 National Gallery, Victoria. Selected works from the Michell Endowment  
1980 Bonython Art Gallery, Adelaide  
1980 Walton-Mayne Memorial Union, Westminster College, New Wilmington, Pa., U.S.A.  
1980 Stuart Gerstman Gallery, Melbourne  
1980 Macquarie Galleries, Sydney  
1980 University of New South Wales Art Prize, Sydney  
1980 Alice Springs Art Foundation Exhibition

### Collections

National Gallery, Victoria  
Yarra Valley School, Victoria  
Adelaide College of the Arts  
Alice Springs Art Foundation, Inc.  
Warrnambool City Art Gallery  
Artbank  
Bendigo Art Gallery  
National Bank Collection  
Manly Art Gallery

### Teaching Experience

- 1975,  
1976-80 Lecturer in Painting, Bendigo College of Advanced Education

### Awards

- 1982 Commonwealth Post-graduate Course Award

Robert Adamson belongs to the group of Australian painters who brought realism to prominence in contemporary Australian painting in the 1970's.

His work was included in the touring exhibition, *Still Life Still Lives*, of 1979 which surveyed the work of contemporary realist artists. In the same year his work was acquired by the National Gallery of Victoria, and it is his most recent work which has gained him recognition.

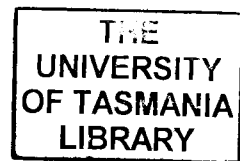
In *Still Life* Adamson has simplified most forms and heightened the color and it offers a glimpse of recognizable objects and a carefully observed reflection of them. His preoccupation with the distorted effects of reflected objects allows an interesting analysis of the painter's attitudes to reality as well as being an innovative change to the still life genre.

DOUG HALL  
Director, Bendigo Art Gallery

## CATALOGUE

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|-----|--|-----|---|
| 275 | Two black boxes, jar, paint tube and pastels.<br>April 1981, oil on canvas, 23.5 x 23.5.                 | 324 | Box with brushes, triangle and can in box with tubes and tent.<br>June 1982, mixed media on c/board, 64 x 76.   |
| 276 | Black box, three paint tubes and pastels.<br>April 1981, oil on canvas, 30.5 x 30.5.                     | 325 | Box with brushes, etc., no.2.<br>June 1982, oil on canvas, 64 x 76.   |
| 285 | One can on film box.<br>August 1981, oil on canvas, 100 x 83.  | 331 | Boxes, jar, frame and brushes in box.<br>July 1982, oil on canvas, 61 x 61.   |
| 292 | Two cans on blue poster with white 'P' and 'E'.<br>November 1981, oil on canvas, 33 x 45.                | 337 | 'Drum girl' poster and landscape with drawing.<br>April-July 1982, oil on canvas, 100 x 75.   |
| 295 | Two cans on blue poster with yellow 'NED'.<br>December 1981, oil on linen, 61 x 61.                      | 338 | Bottles, tins, tubes and brush, white box and can on paint trolley.<br>July 1982, oil on canvas, 100 x 75.  |
| 296 | Two cans on 'ing-get' poster.<br>January 1982, oil on canvas, 61 x 61.                                   | 339 | Can on 'Witching' bag; can on red surface with five pencils; can on paint trolley with nine pencils and pastel stick.<br>April-August 1981, oil on canvas, 93 x 30.5. |
| 298 | Two cans on black and orange poster with face.<br>January 1982, oil on canvas, 46 x 51.                  | 340 | Can on red cardboard; can on blue surface; can on black, yellow and red paper.<br>March 1981 - July 1982, oil on canvas, 93 x 30.5.                                   |
| 299 | Three cans on 'he-pa-ting' poster with landscape.<br>January 1982, oil on canvas, 101 x 151.             | 341 | Can on 'Miss Fitz' bag; can on white strips of paper; can on yellow surface.<br>March - July 1981, oil on linen, 93 x 30.5.   |
| 304 | 'RA' poster with landscape.<br>February 1982, oil on canvas, 90 x 90.                                    | 342 | White boxes in white box, no.1.<br>August 1982, oil on canvas, 75 x 75.   |
| 305 | 'REAS' poster with landscape.<br>February 1982, oil on canvas, 127 x 100.                                | 343 | White boxes, etc., no.2.<br>September 1982, oil pastel on card, 75 x 75.  |
| 308 | Landscape and gum tree from end of car park, Mt. Nelson.<br>March 1982, oil on canvas, 92 x 143.         | 344 | Eighteen paint tubes, palette knife and white box in paint box, no.1.<br>September 1982, oil on canvas, 33 x 39.  |
| 311 | Paint box with paint tubes on green table.<br>April 1982, oil on canvas, 33 x 45.                        | 345 | Eighteen paint tubes, etc., no.2<br>September 1982, oil pastel on c/board, 33 x 90.   |
| 312 | Paint box with tools and things on red surface.<br>April 1982, oil on canvas, 61 x 61.                   | 346 | Pencils on painted surface.<br>Sept. 1982, pastel on paper and card 29 x 30.  |
| 315 | Eleven paint tubes.<br>May 1982, mixed media on cardboard, 33 x 35.                                      | 347 | Nine tubes on painted surface.<br>October 1982, oil on canvas, 33 x 40.   |
| 316 | Two paint tubes.<br>May 1982, mixed media on cardboard, 20 x 20.   | 348 | Seven tubes on painted surface.<br>October 1982, oil on canvas 33 x 40.   |
| 318 | Tripod, mitre box, hammer and corner clamps beneath trolley, no.1.<br>May 1982, oil on canvas, 41 x 71.  | 349 | Seven tubes and box on white surface<br>October 1982, oil on canvas, 40 x 40.   |
| 319 | Tripod, mitre box, etc., no.3.<br>May 1982, mixed media on card, 41 x 71.                                | 350 | Seven tubes on red surface<br>October 1982, oil on canvas 40 x 40.  |
| 320 | Tripod, mitre box, etc., no.4.<br>May 1982, mixed media on card, 41 x 71.                                |     |   |
| 322 | Miscellaneous items on paint trolley.<br>June 1982, mixed media on c/board, 121 x 91.                    |     |   |
| 323 | Box with jars, white box, paint box and can beneath paint trolley.<br>June 1982, oil on canvas, 38 x 76. |     |   |

Measurements are in centimetres, height then width.



Cent  
Thesis  
ADAMSON  
M.F.A.  
1983

The work presented in this exhibition was produced during 1981-82 within the Master of Fine Arts Course at the Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania.

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to be sure